# Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manual Section C-1400

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## Notes on the Manual

On October 1, 2017, Texas Workforce Commission’s Blind Services Division and Rehabilitation Services Division combined to create a single designated state unit (DSU) to administer the vocational rehabilitation program for Texans with disabilities.

The combined Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manual (VRSM) was initially published on October 1, 2017. The latest update to this manual is reflected in the chapters below.

Please note that VRSM includes links to information that is intended to provide additional decision-making supports to VR staff. Some of this information may not be available to individuals who are accessing the VRSM outside of TWC's firewall. Copies of materials that cannot be accessed directly through links can be made available upon request.

Substantive revisions to the content are noted in the VRSM List of Revisions. Any printed versions may not contain the latest policy changes.

If you have any questions about VRSM content, please contact the TWC Vocational Rehabilitation Division Policy Team at state office by sending an email message to [vrsm.support@twc.texas.gov](mailto:vrsm.support@twc.texas.gov).

## Manual Overview

The VR Services Manual:

* helps ensure VR customers receive quality services to assist them in achieving successful competitive integrated employment outcomes as a result of their participation in vocational rehabilitation services.;
* helps to ensure taxpayer funds are spent wisely and each purchase paid for with public funds represents full value to the taxpayer; and
* provides published policies and procedures for maintaining compliance with federal and state laws, statutes, and rules or regulations.

The latest update to this manual is reflected in the chapters below. Any printed versions may not contain the latest policy changes.

# Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manual C-1400: Supportive Goods and Services

## Introduction

This section describes policies and procedures that apply to goods and services that:

* are necessary to support Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services that are listed on the customer’s IPE or IPE amendment; and
* are included in the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), the current IPE amendment, or in a service justification case note.

Supportive goods and services may also be provided when they are necessary for a customer to participate in assessments to determine eligibility for VR services and identify VR needs.

These goods and services may include:

* maintenance;
* customer transportation;
* personal attendant services;
* services to family members;
* child care services;
* occupational licenses; or
* tools and equipment.

In addition to the goods and services listed above, other goods and services detailed throughout this manual may be considered supportive goods and services as long as it is clear that they are necessary to support planned VR services.

If a counselor has determined that an exception will facilitate a customer’s progress and there is not an approval exception listed in policy, counselors are encouraged to staff the request through their chain of management to the Deputy Division Director for Field Services for consideration. VRSM clearly states when no exceptions are allowed.

## C-1401: Maintenance

Maintenance is a type of financial support that can be paid directly to an individual who has applied for and/or is receiving VR services.

VR uses three categories of maintenance:

* Recurring maintenance
* Nonrecurring maintenance
* Short-term housing maintenance

To be approved, all maintenance expenditures must be clearly documented in the case file as necessary and reasonable under the circumstances prevailing at the time a decision is made.

Decision-making factors to consider include, but are not limited to:

* individual rehabilitation needs consistent with the individual's informed choice;
* market rates or limitations specified by Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) policy;
* availability of cost-effective alternatives; and
* all other established policies and procedures, including policies and procedures for customer participation in cost of services, also known as basic living requirements (BLR).

Maintenance cannot be used for costs directly associated with transportation, such as mileage or driver services. For more information about transportation as a supportive service, refer to VRSM C-1402: Transportation Services.

### C-1401-1: Legal Authorization

VR may authorize and pay maintenance to a customer in accordance with the definition of "maintenance" found in federal regulations at 34 CFR §361.5(c) (34).

#### 34 CFR §361.5(c) (34)

"Maintenance means monetary support provided to an individual for expenses, such as food, shelter, and clothing, that are in excess of the normal expenses of the individual and that are necessitated by the individual's participation in an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs or the individual's receipt of vocational rehabilitation services under an individualized plan for employment."

VR may authorize and pay maintenance only for expenses that are in excess of the normal expenses of the individual and that are necessary for participation in:

* assessments for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs; or
* services under an IPE.

#### Normal Living Expenses Policy

As approved by TWC's three-member Commission, "normal living expenses include such items as housing, food, clothing, and transportation, and whatever additional expenses would be considered necessary to those broad categories (not directly associated with the receipt of VR services), such as utility costs and vehicle insurance."

#### 2005 Texas Government Code Chapter 2252

State law prohibits the state comptroller from issuing a maintenance warrant directly to an individual who owes the state or federal government delinquent taxes or a defaulted debt (for example, a Texas Guaranteed Student Loan).

### C-1401-2: Recurring Maintenance

Recurring maintenance (also referred to as "weekly maintenance" in ReHabWorks (RHW) is used for expenses that are incurred on a recurring basis as a direct result of participation in VR services.

Recurring maintenance payments may:

* not exceed $55 per week;
* be paid during VR academic or vocational training, as determined necessary, but:
  + must not exceed 104 weeks for a customer who is pursuing vocational training;
  + must not exceed 156 weeks for a customer who is pursuing academic college-level training;
* be paid to a customer in self-employment, as determined necessary, but must not exceed 16 weeks; and
* be paid for health insurance premiums for customers who do not have health insurance if insurance is required by a business for participation in the following:
  + Work Experience Services;
  + Paid Work Experience purchased through Local Workforce Development boards (Boards);
  + Wage Services for Work Experience through WorkQuest;
  + Practicums;
  + Clinicals; and
  + Internships.

Note: Health insurance premiums may only be purchased while the customer is participating in the above bulleted services. VR staff must document the options explored for health insurance and the justification for which option best meets the customer’s vocational needs. The VR Manager may make an exception to exceed $55/week for the health insurance premiums.

VR Manager review and approval are required for all recurring maintenance service authorizations.

#### Documentation of Recurring Maintenance

Customers must be informed that they are required to maintain the Form VR2180, Maintenance Expense Log, to verify that the maintenance funds are being used for their intended purpose. The Form VR2180 must be turned in and reviewed by the VR counselor monthly. Customers must maintain copies of receipts to verify the content of the Form VR2180, Maintenance Expense Log, for audit purposes, but these receipts do not need to be turned in to VR with the VR2180 form.

If the Form VR2180, Maintenance Expense Log for recurring maintenance is not turned in in a timely manner or if it is determined that the funds were not used for their intended purpose, no additional maintenance payments can be authorized. VR Manager review and approval is required before recurring maintenance is reinstated.

VR Manager review and approval must be completed and documented in RHW before a service authorization is issued.

### C-1401-3: Nonrecurring Maintenance

Nonrecurring maintenance (also referred to as "one-time maintenance" in RHW) is used for onetime expenses that are incurred as a direct result of participation in VR services.

Nonrecurring maintenance may also be used to purchase the following:

* Maximum Affordable Payment Schedule (MAPS) goods and services (only when the vendor will not accept a VR service authorization) as follows:
  + Applicable MAPS rate must still be applied to determine the amount of maintenance to be paid
  + The process may not be used to exceed established MAPS fees.
  + VR Manager approval is required
* Business start-up costs for self-employment. (Refer to VRSM C-1100: Self-Employment for details.)
* Escort or attendant supports (when required) for a customer (use current state per diem rate).
* Initial one-time costs, such as a security deposit or charges for the initiation of utilities, that are required in order for an individual to relocate for a job placement or to participate in VR services.
* Health insurance premiums - for customers who do not have health insurance if insurance is required by a business for participation in the following:
  + Work Experience Services;
  + Paid Work Experience purchased through Local Workforce Development Boards (Boards);
  + Wage Services for Work Experience through WorkQuest;
  + Practicums;
  + Clinicals; and
  + Internships.

Note: Health insurance premiums may only be purchased while the customer is participating in the above bulleted services.  VR staff must document the options explored for health insurance and the justification for which option best meets the customer's vocational needs.

#### Documentation of Nonrecurring Maintenance

The customer must provide a receipt that shows proof of purchase from the vendor to verify that funds were used for their intended purpose.

If a receipt for nonrecurring maintenance is not turned in or if it is determined that the funds were not used for their intended purpose, authorization of any additional maintenance funds for any purpose requires VR Manager review and approval.

VR Manager approval is required for all nonrecurring maintenance that is equal to or greater than $400 for a single service authorization.

Note: Staff must send an email to [VR RHW Provider Services](mailto:vr.rhw.providerservices@twc.texas.gov) to have the customer established as a provider when the amount is over $400.

VR Manager review and approval are required before maintenance can be paid to the customer to purchase goods or services that have more specific purchasing processes and/or specifications available in RHW.

VR Manager review and approval must be completed and documented in RHW before the service authorization is issued.

### C-1401-4: Short-Term Housing Maintenance

Short-term housing maintenance paid to a customer is used only for short-term housing expenses that are incurred as a direct result of participation in vocational rehabilitation (VR) assessments or services. It must not be used to pay a customer's mortgage payment or usual and customary rent for housing, which are considered normal living expenses.

When it is expected that short-term housing maintenance (in excess of normal living expenses—see VRSM C-1401-1: Legal Authorization for the definition of "normal living expenses") will exceed a total of three months (cumulatively or consecutively), the VR team must initiate the process to establish the landlord or lessor as a provider for "short-term housing" during the first month for which short-term housing maintenance is authorized. See VRSM D-211: Setting Up and Paying Providers and VRSM C-1401-5: Short-Term Housing for more information on this process.

If the landlord or lessor declines to be established as a provider for any reason, or if he or she has a hold through the comptroller and cannot be paid, alternate housing must be explored. If no other acceptable options are available, justification for paying short-term housing maintenance to the customer requires VR Manager approval. See "Documentation of Short-Term Housing Maintenance" for more information on documentation requirements when the customer is receiving the funds to be paid to the landlord or lessor.

Once the landlord or lessor is established as a VR provider, short-term housing maintenance is paid as short-term housing to the providing landlord or lessor.

See VRSM C-1401-5: Short-Term Housing and VRSM D-213-2: Advance Payments for additional information.

#### Creating a Service Record for Short-Term Housing Maintenance

A service record must be created with the following specifications for short-term housing maintenance payments:

* Level 1 – Maintenance
* Level 2 – Maintenance, Third Party, and Short-Term Housing
* Level 3 – Third Party and Short-Term Housing
* Level 4 – Short-Term Housing

#### Documentation of Short-Term Housing Maintenance

The customer must provide a receipt that shows proof of payment to the provider to verify that funds were used for the intended purpose before any additional funds are released to the customer for any purpose. If a receipt is not turned in or if it is determined that the funds were not used for the intended purpose, authorization of any additional funds for any purpose requires VR Manager approval.

#### Approval Requirements for Short-Term Housing Maintenance

VR Manager approval is required for all short-term housing maintenance and is limited to three-month increments (cumulatively or consecutively). For example, a VR Manager may approve an initial three months of short-term housing maintenance; if additional short-term housing maintenance is needed beyond the initial three months for any reason, additional VR Manager review and approval is required for each three-month period.

VR Manager approval must be completed and documented in ReHabWorks (RHW) before the service authorization is issued.

### C-1401-5: Short-Term Housing

Short-term housing is used only for short-term housing expenses that are paid to a providing landlord or lessor and incurred by the customer as a direct result of participation in VR assessments or services. It must not be used to pay a customer's mortgage payment or the customer's usual and customary rent for housing, which are considered normal living expenses.

The VR counselor may approve an amount for short-term housing paid to a provider that is more than the customer's normal living expenses only when:

* the amount is the best-value decision to support VR assessments and services other than training; and
* the service is not available in the customer's local community (the same town as the customer's residence or within a 50-mile radius of the customer's residence).

Customers attending CCRC Outreach Mini-trainings are exempt from the 50-mile radius requirement.

Short-term housing maintenance can be used to pay initial short-term housing while the landlord or lessor is being set up as a provider. It cannot be used once the landlord or lessor is set up for direct payment in RHW.

#### Creating a Service Record for Short-Term Housing Expenses

A service record must be created with the following specifications for short-term housing payments:

* Level 1 – Multiple Goods and Services Including Child Care; Youth Goods and Services, Booth Rental and Room and Board for Training and Short Term Housing for Other Services
* Level 2 – Room and Board for Training, Short Term Housing for Other Services; Meeting Room Space and Booth Rentals
* Level 3 – Short-Term Housing for Other VR Services
* Level 4 – Short-Term Housing for Other VR Services

#### Approval Requirements for Short-Term Housing Expenses

VR Manager review and approval are required for all short-term housing and is limited to three-month increments (cumulatively or consecutively).

### C-1401-6: Restrictions on the Use of Maintenance

Maintenance is not used for the following services unless an exception is obtained from the Deputy Division Director of Field Services Delivery:

* tuition or fees
* compensation for an on-the-job training program
* goods and services that are under contract
* mortgage payments, usual and customary rent for housing, and any associated fees or expenses
* reimbursements

No exceptions are allowed for any items listed in VRSM D-206: Purchasing Restrictions.

### C-1401-7: Processing Maintenance Payments

Maintenance may be authorized and paid in advance.

Maintenance checks, or warrants, are mailed:

* directly to the customer or third-party payee; or
* to the VR field office in exceptional circumstances and only with the VR Manager's approval. Refer to VRSM D-207-5: Customer Warrants Mailed to the VR Office.

#### Maintenance Service Authorizations

A service record must be created with the following specifications for maintenance:

* Level 1—Maintenance—93150
* Level 2—Maintenance, One Time—93150-90335
* Level 2—Maintenance, Recurring—93150-90340
* Level 2—Maintenance, Third Party, and Short-Term Housing—93150-90330

Choose the appropriate Level 3 and 4.

## C-1402: Transportation Services

Transportation is a type of financial support that can be paid directly to an individual who has applied for and/or is receiving VR services or to a third party that will provide the transportation. Transportation payments may not be used to pay for any "normal living expenses."

VR pays transportation to the customer for the use of the customer's vehicle for transportation when this is the most economical and effective method.

VR uses the following categories of transportation:

* Recurring transportation paid to a public or private carrier,
* Nonrecurring transportation paid to a public or private carrier, and
* Airfare.

To be approved, all transportation expenditures must be clearly documented in the case file as necessary and reasonable under the circumstances prevailing at the time a decision is made.

Decision-making factors to consider include, but are not limited to:

* Customer's informed choice,
* Best value,
* Use of comparable benefits, and
* Required customer participation in cost of services (also referred to as BLR).

For more information refer to VRSM D-203: Purchasing Decisions.

If transportation assistance is anticipated at the time the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) is completed, it must be included on the customer's IPE. However, if the need for nonrecurring transportation is identified after the IPE has been completed, a service justification case note can be used to document this service unless the case is in employment phase in RHW. If the case is in employment phase in RHW an IPE amendment is required. All recurring transportation must be included on the IPE or IPE amendment.

Refer to VRSM B-500: Individualized Plan for Employment and Post-Employment for more information on IPEs.

Refer to VRSM E-300: Case Notes Requirements for more information on documentation.

### C-1402-1: Legal Authorization

#### 34 CFR §361.5(c)(56)

"Transportation means travel and related expenses that are necessary to enable an applicant or eligible individual to participate in a vocational rehabilitation service, including expenses for training in the use of public transportation vehicles and systems."

If a warrant is issued to a customer or other individual who owes the state delinquent taxes, defaulted debt, or other funds, receipt of that payment could be subject to substantial delays. Reference: Texas Government Code Chapter 2252.

### C-1402-2: Transportation Providers

Transportation can be provided through the following:

* Public carrier
* Private carrier

Transportation of a customer for any purpose must be by the most economical and effective carrier.

Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center (CCRC) staff members who are formally approved to transport customers may do so but must drive only TWC-owned vehicles. Exceptions to this require consultation with the VR Division Deputy Director of Field Services Delivery and the Office of General Counsel.

With the exception of CCRC staff who are approved to transport customers, VR staff members are not allowed to transport VR customers. There are no exceptions allowed to this restriction.

#### Public Carrier

A public carrier is a vehicle or set of vehicles in the business of transporting the public, for example:

* city transit service;
* airline;
* bus company; and
* taxi company.

#### Private Carrier

A private carrier is an individual or private organization that owns a vehicle and is not customarily for hire.

### C-1402-3: Recurring Transportation

Recurring transportation includes advance payments that should be paid weekly to the private carrier for transportation that is necessary for the customer to participate in VR services.

VR Manager approval is required for any additional recurring transportation that exceeds a total of 104 weeks. The approval is limited to six-month increments (cumulatively or consecutively).

Transportation costs that are more than $400 for a single service authorization require VR Manager approval.

#### Documentation of Recurring Transportation

Documentation for recurring transportation must include:

* VR Manager approval (if required); and
* a case note that includes:
  + calculations,
  + the source used to define "actual mileage," and
  + confirms the service for which transportation is required.

Customers must be informed that they are required to maintain the Form VR2181, Transportation Log, to verify that the private carrier recurring transportation funds were used for their intended purpose. The customer must turn in the Form VR2181, Transportation Log monthly, which must be reviewed by the VR counselor before the next payment is authorized.

If the Form VR2181, Transportation Log, for private carrier recurring transportation is not turned in or if it is determined that the funds were not used for their intended purpose, VR Manager review and approval is required before additional transportation payments can be authorized or any new service authorizations for transportation are issued.

VR Manager review and approval must be documented in ReHabWorks (RHW). See the ReHabWorks Users Guide E-100: Purchase Approval Requests on the TWC SharePoint for additional information about RHW Purchase Approvals.

#### Documentation of Recurring Bus Passes for Customers

Documentation for bus passes must include a case note that documents:

* the quantity of bus passes needed to support the VR service, and
* a confirmation of the service for which transportation is required.

If the VR office purchases bus tickets in bulk and issues them directly to the customer, a case note must be entered in RHW identifying the date the customer picked up the bus pass. A copy of the Form VR2014, Rehabilitation Equipment, Item, and Bus Pass Receipt signed by the customer must be filed in the customer's paper case file. Refer to VRSM C-1402-6: Local Bus Passes for VR Customers for more information.

Customers must be informed that they are required to maintain the Form VR2181, Transportation Log, to verify that the bus passes are being used for their intended purpose. The Form VR2181 must be turned in and reviewed by the VR counselor before the next bus pass is issued or purchased.

If the Form VR2181, Transportation Log for recurring transportation is not turned in, or if it is determined that the funds were not used for their intended purpose, VR Manager review and approval is required before additional transportation payments can be authorized or any new service authorizations for transportation are issued.

### C-1402-4: Nonrecurring Transportation

Nonrecurring transportation is a onetime advance payment to the private carrier for transportation that is necessary for the customer to participate in a single VR assessment or IPE service.

Transportation costs that are more than $400 for a single service authorization (this excludes airfare) require VR Manager approval.

#### Documentation of Nonrecurring Transportation

Documentation for transportation must include:

* VR Manager approval (if required); and
* a service justification case note that includes:
  + calculations,
  + the source used to define "actual mileage," and
  + confirms the service for which transportation is required.

If the case is in employment phase in RHW an IPE amendment is also required.

#### Documentation of Nonrecurring Bus Passes for Customers

Documentation for transportation must include:

* a service justification case note or be included in the IPE or IPE amendment;
* the quantity of bus passes needed to support the VR service; and
* a case note that confirms the service for which transportation is required.

If the case is in employment phase in RHW an IPE amendment is required.

If the VR office issues bus passes, a case note must be issued in RHW identifying the date the customer picked up the bus pass. A copy of the Form VR2014, Rehabilitation Equipment, Item, and Bus Pass Receipt signed by the customer must be filed in the customer's paper case file. Refer to VRSM C-1402-6: Local Bus Passes for VR Customers for more information.

### C-1402-5: Processing Transportation Payments

VR staff must email [VR RHW Provider Services](mailto:vr.rhw.providerservices@twc.texas.gov) to have the customer established as a provider when the amount is more than $400 for a single service authorization. Refer to VRSM D-211: Setting Up and Paying Providers for more information.

VR staff must authorize the payment of transportation in advance to the customer. The allowable transportation payment rates listed below are based on the rates published on the [Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts](https://fmx.cpa.texas.gov/fmx/travel/textravel/rates/current.php) website. VR reviews and, when necessary, updates these rates annually.

As of April 1, 2020, transportation payments (recurring or nonrecurring) are limited to one of the following:

* Actual cost to customer for public transportation
* Actual mileage times the federal privately-owned vehicle mileage rate published on the [Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts](https://fmx.cpa.texas.gov/fmx/travel/textravel/rates/current.php) website.

Recurring transportation payments should be issued monthly or for the duration of the semester or grading period. Transportation payments are advance payments and should be paid in advance.

For example:

An SA for recurring transportation payments for the fall semester is issued for the entire semester. Transportation payments are paid weekly in advance. The customer is required to turn in the Form VR2181, Transportation Log monthly. If the Form VR2181 is not turned in, no further payments are authorized unless VR Manager review and approval is obtained.

Do not use "Maintenance" specifications in RHW to make transportation payments.

Do not split service authorizations to avoid threshold requirements based on specific dollar amounts.

Transportation warrants are mailed:

* directly to the customer or legally appointed third-party payee; or
* to the VR office in exceptional circumstances and only with VR Manager approval. Refer to VRSM D-207-5: Customer Warrants Mailed to the VR Office.

#### Transportation Service Authorizations

A service record must be created with the following specifications for transportation payments:

Level 1—Transportation and Relocation Services—78111

Choose the appropriate level: Level 2, 3, or 4.

### C-1402-6: Local Bus Passes for VR Customers

The management support team purchases local bus tickets, passes, tokens, and transfers in bulk for VR customers. Bus passes are distributed to VR customers that are directly related to and required for their participation in VR services. Once received in the VR office, the bus passes must be kept under lock and key.

When the need for bus passes are identified, the:

1. VR counselor must enter service justification case note in RHW justifying the need for transportation, unless the case is in employment phase in RHW. If the case is in employment phase in RHW an IPE amendment is required;
2. Customer/representative must be present and sign the Form VR2014, Rehabilitation Equipment, Item, and Bus Pass Receipt once they receive the bus pass;
3. Staff will request the bus pass from the management team or designee;
4. VR staff are required to enter the date, customer's name, and case ID number onto the Form VR2015, Office Bus Pass Log;
5. Management team or designee will also sign the Form VR2015, Office Bus Pass Log,
6. Once the Form VR2014, Rehabilitation Equipment, Item, and Bus Pass Receipt document has been completed, VR staff are required to place it in the customer's paper case file; and
7. The Form VR2015, Office Bus Pass Log must be kept with the management team.

Refer to VRSM C-1402-3: Recurring Transportation and VRSM C-1402-4 Nonrecurring Transportation for additional information.

### C-1402-7: Airfare

Airfare can be purchased to meet a customer's transportation needs only if:

* airfare is the most cost-effective method (flying versus driving);
* airfare is an appropriate means of transportation for the customer based on potential disability-related factors; or
* no reasonable alternative exists.

When considering the cost of airfare as a transportation alternative, the VR counselor considers all related costs, such as the cost of transportation to and from the airport, parking, vehicle rental, fuel, or taxi. The VR counselor documents the cost comparison clearly in a case note.

Customer airfare purchases are completed using the Customer Central Billed Account (CBA).

Using the CBA for customer airfare purchases allows caseload-carrying staff members to purchase customer airfare at state-contracted rates.

In addition to reducing airfare costs for customer travel, using the CBA has the following benefits:

* Advance purchase is not necessary
* No minimum or maximum length of stay
* 100 percent refundable tickets if cancelled or unused

When using the CBA, reservations must be made at least 14 days in advance and ticketed at least seven days in advance to allow for review and to ensure that the itinerary is acceptable to the customer. For travel being requested during holiday periods (October through January), reservations must be made at least 30 days in advance.

#### Requesting Customer Air Travel

The VR staff member:

* completes and signs Form VR1762, Central Billing Request for Consumer Airfare, and include the service authorization number in the Comments field (see ReHabWorks Users Guide, E-200: Case Service Record, E-203-10: Consumer Airfare for details on the TWC SharePoint site); and
* emails the signed Form VR1762 to the Accounting–Consumer Airfare Team at [Payables.ConsumerAirfare@twc.texas.gov](mailto:Payables.ConsumerAirfare@twc.texas.gov).

On Form VR1762, VR staff notes any special needs or requirements that the customer or passenger may have. For example, VR staff documents whether the customer:

* needs to be on a specific flight to travel with a group;
* requires accommodations; or
* requires special seating (describe the circumstances).

#### Reserve and Verify Customer Airfare

The following procedures must be used to book and verify the travel:

1. Accounting–Consumer Airfare Team authorizes the charge to the Customer CBA.
2. Travel agency books the airfare and emails the reservation and ticket confirmation itinerary to the Accounting--Consumer Airfare Team.
3. Accounting–Consumer Airfare Team maintains a printed copy of the itinerary in the Customer CBA and forwards the confirmation by email to the VR staff member who requested the travel.
4. The VR staff member must respond by email to the [Consumer Airfare](mailto:payables.consumerairfare@twc.texas.gov) mailbox to confirm that the forwarded itinerary is acceptable.
5. The VR staff member, upon confirming the itinerary as acceptable, completes a service record and service authorization using the date, purchase price, and fees information provided. (Note: The VR staff does not create the service authorization for payment now; this will be done in step 8.)
6. The customer or passenger must provide the itinerary or confirmation number and a valid driver's license, photo ID, or other acceptable proof of identification. (Acceptable forms of identification are found at [Transportation Security Administration Identification](https://www.tsa.gov/travel/security-screening/identification).)
7. The VR staff member receives a mass email from the Accounting–Consumer Airfare Team paying the bank statement once the customer's travel is shown on the bank statement. (Note: The email names all customers that traveled within that bank statement period. The VR staff copies and redacts names of all other customers from the document before filing with the customer's purchasing records.) See ReHabWorks Users Guide, E-200: Case Service Record, E-203-10: Customer Airfare on the TWC SharePoint site for details.
8. The VR staff member adds the service authorization number in the appropriate column for the customer.
9. Accounting verifies and audits the service authorization and lets the VR staff member know when he or she can receive and authorize payment for the customer's travel.

#### Processing the Payment

For the Accounting–Consumer Airfare Team to process the payment for customer travel, the VR team must have created the service record and service authorization in RHW.

If discrepancies are noted between the service record, service authorization, or invoice received by the Accounting–Consumer Airfare Team, a team member emails the VR team to resolve the differences.

#### Cancelled Flights

The ticket is paid for using a VR CBA credit card. If the customer's ticket requires cancellation, the VR team must notify the Accounting–Customer Airfare Team immediately by email at [Payables.ConsumerAirfare@twc.texas.gov](mailto:Payables.ConsumerAirfare@twc.texas.gov) or by phone at 512-463-1671, option 4, for immediate assistance. The following responsibilities and conditions apply:

* The customer is not authorized at any time for any reason to make any changes or cancel his or her flight itinerary. Additional costs incurred will be the responsibility of the customer. The customer must go through the VR team to make any changes or cancel flight itinerary.
* The VR team is responsible for closing the service authorization in RHW. For all state-purchased Short's Travel itineraries, a cancellation fee is assessed.

#### Airfare Limits

Air transportation for customers who are attending in-state or out-of-state training is limited to no more than two round-trip economy tickets per year. Exceptions require review and approval by the VR Manager.

If there are questions regarding customer airfare procedures, contact the Accounting–Consumer Airfare Team in one of the following ways:

* Email [TWC Consumer Airfare](mailto:payables.consumerairfare@twc.texas.gov)
* Phone 512-463-1671, option 4

### C-1402-8: Relocation

If the customer cannot participate in IPE services or employment because transportation is not available, the VR counselor discusses with the customer the option of relocating to a community that meets the customer's transportation needs.

If the customer decides to move, then the VR counselor determines the extent of help necessary to achieve the move. Some customers require minimal help (for example, helping to pay for moving van rental, mileage, and boxes) while others, because of disability-related limitations, may require full assistance (such as packers, movers, and unpackers).

If the VR counselor plans to purchase services from a moving company, he or she contacts TWC Consumer Procurement at [consumer.procurement@twc.texas.gov](mailto:consumer.procurement@twc.texas.gov) for help in determining if using a state term contract results in best value.

Initial one-time costs, such as a security deposit or charges for the initiation of utilities, that are required in order for an individual to relocate for a job placement or to participate in VR services. These are allowable maintenance costs. Refer to VRSM C-1401-3: Nonrecurring Maintenance.

### C-1402-9: Vehicle Repair

As with other transportation services, VR provides payment for the repair of the customer's vehicle only when necessary for the customer to participate in other planned services, such as vocational training and job-related services.

#### Payment for Vehicle Repair

Payment for vehicle repair, including parts and labor, is authorized only when:

* no comparable services or benefits are available to meet this customer's transportation needs; and
* repair is the most cost-effective means to meet those needs.

Authorization covers only repairs that are required to make the vehicle safe and operable.

#### Approval Requirements

VR Supervisor approval is required for vehicle repairs when the total cost of the repair is greater than $2,500, or when the total cost exceeds the vehicle's value.

#### Documentation Requirements

Before authorizing payment, the VR counselor considers and documents in a case note that:

* the vehicle is:
  + owned by the customer or a family member (if not, VR Manager approval is required); and
  + the customer's primary means of transportation;
* vehicle repair is a best-value decision to meet the customer's transportation needs, and:
  + based on the vehicle's overall condition, ongoing repairs are not expected; and
  + repair costs do not exceed the vehicle's value as estimated from Kelly Blue Book using the "sell to private party" value (After the VR counselor reviews and makes the decision to authorize the service, he or she files a copy of the computer-generated estimate in the case file.)
* there are no comparable services and benefits available to meet the customer's transportation needs, such as public bus service; and
* the customer has a plan for how to meet transportation expenses after case closure.

For additional information about repairs to vehicle modifications, see C VRSM -204: Vehicle Modification Services.

### C-1402-10: Vehicle Rental

Vehicle rental can be purchased if:

* it is economically justified; and
* no reasonable alternative exists.

#### Approval Requirements

VR Supervisor approval is required for vehicle rentals.

Required Vehicle Rental Procedures

VR staff obtains two quotes for an economy class vehicle from a reputable auto rental agency or vehicle modification provider. If the customer requires a higher class of vehicle, document the justification for management review. (Note: Do not request state rates, because only state employees may use them.)

VR staff obtains copies of documents for the customer's case file that confirm that the customer or the customer's driver is:

* over 21 years old;
* has a valid driver's license; and
* has proof of insurance.

If the customer or his or her driver does not have collision insurance, VR may pay the rental agency's additional daily rate for required insurance. VR does not pay for personal accident insurance.

The customer is responsible for:

* returning the rental vehicle in the condition in which it was received; and
* paying any costs above and beyond the original rental agreement.

## C-1403: Personal Assistant Services

Personal assistance services (PAS) involve a range of services provided by one or more individuals. The service is designed to help a customer with a disability with on-the-job activities or job-related daily living activities that the customer would perform if he or she did not have a disability.

### C-1403-1: Legal Authorization

#### 34 CFR §361.5 (38) (i)(ii)(iii)(iv)

"(38) Personal assistance services means a range of services, including, among other things, training in managing, supervising, and directing personal assistance services, provided by one or more persons, that are—

(i) Designed to assist an individual with a disability to perform daily living activities on or off the job that the individual would typically perform without assistance if the individual did not have a disability;

(ii) Designed to increase the individual's control in life and ability to perform everyday activities on or off the job;

(iii) Necessary to the achievement of an employment outcome; and

(iv) Provided only while the individual is receiving other vocational rehabilitation services. The services may include training in managing, supervising, and directing personal assistance services."

#### 34 CFR §361.42 (d)(i)(iv)

"(iv) The designated State unit must provide appropriate supports, including, but not limited to, assistive technology devices and services and personal assistance services, to accommodate the rehabilitation needs of the individual during the trial work experiences."

### C-1403-2: Planning and Fees

The VR counselor and the customer must try to identify assistive devices and alternative methods to enable the customer to perform tasks independently without a personal assistant.

PAS may not be provided as a stand-alone service; they may only be provided to support other VR services that are included on the IPE, such as vocational training, academic training, attending the Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center (CCRC), employment services, supported employment, or job placement.

PAS must be included in the customer's IPE or IPE amendment.

VR Supervisor approval is required to continue PAS after six months, and approval is limited to six-month increments.

#### Comparable Benefits

Comparable benefits must be used before case service funds are encumbered when these benefits are readily available and appropriate for the customer's needs. The VR counselor may supplement these comparable services, as necessary, with case service funds.

#### Fees

Fees for PAS are negotiated by the customer, personal assistant, and VR counselor, with the final determination made by the VR counselor. Fees vary depending on the needs of the customer, the availability of personal assistants, local prevailing rates for PAS, and other factors. (Note: To find the local prevailing rates for PAS, check with WorkInTexas.com labor market review information for the area of services.)

Any fee previously negotiated between VR and an organization when PAS are provided by that organization must be used.

#### Payments

The personal assistant or his or her company must be set up as a provider for VR and paid directly for services. VR Managers may not make an exception to this requirement.

For more information on setting the personal assistant as a provider, see VRSM D-200: Purchasing Goods and Services.

### C-1403-3: Responsibilities

The customer is responsible for deciding if a personal assistant is qualified to meet the customer's personal attendant needs. The prospective personal assistant must have orientation and training in providing PAS. Due to the individualized nature of the services that the attendant provides, the customer is primarily responsible for instructing the personal assistant regarding specific needs and informing the VR counselor of issues related to the on-the-job performance of the personal assistant.

A plan must be in place for the customer to assume financial responsibility for the PAS if this service is needed after he or she is employed. See VRSM C-1403-5: Providing Assistant Services while Providing Employment Assistance for related service limitations.

The VR counselor and the customer share the responsibility for locating a suitable personal assistant. However, because of the individualized nature of PAS, the customer must assume primary responsibility for instructing the personal assistant regarding his or her specific needs. The customer must inform the VR counselor of the assistant's job performance.

Centers for Independent Living Services (CILS) and student service offices on college campuses are often sources for locating and training personal assistants.

The information and referral (I&R) coordinator at local CILS may be a source for locating PAS for assisting the customer with independent living. The local Department of State Health Services (DSHS) office and home health agencies are sources for PAS when the customer's needs also include health maintenance services delegated by a registered nurse.

In searching for PAS, the customer must be involved to the greatest degree possible in determining:

* the type and range of services needed;
* the number of PAS hours needed; and
* the location of PAS—home, community, or workplace.

The VR counselor and the customer may find information on local personal assistant resources from the following:

* CILS
* CILS I&R coordinators
* Other CILS customers who use PAS
* Home health agencies
* RNs who coordinate PAS
* Local DSHS offices

Note: When possible, the customer must:

* contact the PAS resource to get information on services;
* interview several PAS providers;
* talk to references; and
* hire the personal assistant.

### C-1403-4: Customers Hiring Their Own Personal Assistants

VR may not be the employer of record for a customer's personal assistant. A customer who hires a personal assistant is the employer under applicable employer tax laws and is responsible for:

* hiring and dismissing the assistant;
* training the assistant in the delivery of services; and
* supervising the assistant in the delivery of services or arranging for a friend or relative to provide direct supervision of the assistant.

### C-1403-5: Providing Assistant Services while Providing Employment Assistance

When employment assistance and counseling and guidance are the primary services being provided, PAS are limited to a maximum of six months.

The case file must clearly document ongoing employment assistance activities while VR is paying for PAS.

The VR counselor may continue ensuring that PAS are available for:

* 60 days after the customer enters employment; or
* up to a maximum of 120 days with documented rationale.

### C-1403-6: Supporting Relocation from a Nursing Home or Institution

PAS may be provided for up to 12 months, if a customer is relocating to a private residence from a:

* nursing home;
* community residential or group home; or
* mental health facility.

#### Payment for Personal Assistance Services

To receive payment for PAS, the customer or service provider must submit a monthly written statement to VR that contains:

* the services rendered by the personal assistant during the customer's VR activity;
* the number of hours worked by the personal assistant; and
* any additional information specified by the customer's VR counselor that is needed to process reimbursement.

## C-1404: Services to the Customer's Family Members

VR may arrange, purchase, or provide services to the customer's family members only if without such services, the customer would be unable to begin or continue his or her IPE, and the program would be jeopardized or interfered with to the extent that the employment goal would be unnecessarily delayed or could not be achieved.

When required, services are furnished only for family members meeting the definition of family as defined in 34 CFR §361.5(c)(22). The services are not available through existing community resources, agencies, or comparable services or benefits.

### C-1404-1: Legal Authorization

#### 34 CFR §361.48(b)(9)

"(b) Services for individuals who have applied for or been determined eligible for vocational rehabilitation services. As appropriate to the vocational rehabilitation needs of each individual and consistent with each individual's individualized plan for employment, the designated State unit must ensure that the following vocational rehabilitation services are available to assist the individual with a disability in preparing for, securing, retaining, advancing in or regaining an employment outcome that is consistent with the individual's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice:

(9) Vocational rehabilitation services to family members, as defined in §361.5(c) (23), of an applicant or eligible individual if necessary to enable the applicant or eligible individual to achieve an employment outcome."

#### 34 CFR §361.5(c)(22)

"(22) Family member, for purposes of receiving vocational rehabilitation services in accordance with §361.48(b)(9), means an individual—

(i) Who either—

(A) Is a relative or guardian of an applicant or eligible individual; or

(B) Lives in the same household as an applicant or eligible individual;

(ii) Who has a substantial interest in the well-being of that individual; and

(iii) Whose receipt of vocational rehabilitation services is necessary to enable the applicant or eligible individual to achieve an employment outcome."

### C-1404-2: Documentation of Services for Family Members

Documentation of services to family members must meet all documentation requirements for that service as outlined throughout this manual. Additionally, the VR counselor must clearly describe in case notes:

* the name of the family member or members who need the services;
* the family member's relationship to the customer;
* what services are needed; and
* how the services are expected to make a substantial contribution to the customer's ability to participate in and complete planned VR services and goals.

## C-1405: Child Care Services

If a customer has children under the age of 13 and the customer cannot complete planned vocational activities without child care, the VR counselor may assist the customer in exploring the availability of child care services. Children 13 and older who require supervision because of a disability also qualify for this service. Examples of activities related to the vocational goal include diagnostic services, physical restoration, training, and employment.

### C-1405-1: Child Care Resources

Child care services can be purchased with VR funds only when they are required for participation in VR services and when they are not available through existing community resources, agencies, or comparable services or benefits.

The VR team can also explore resources such as the customer's family members, neighbors, or community day-care programs to see if they can meet the customer's child care needs.

[Texas Workforce Commission Workforce Solutions Child Care program](https://www.twc.texas.gov/students/child-care-program) offers child care for low-income individuals who are working or participating in training or educational activities leading to employment. Customers must apply for this resource to meet their child care needs before VR funds are authorized.

If the customer is not eligible for the TWC Child Care program or if the TWC Child Care program has a waiting list, or if the customer has no comparable benefits, VR may purchase child care services. The customer must select a provider who is licensed, registered, or listed on the [Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) website](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care/Search_Texas_Child_Care/ppFacilitySearchDayCare.asp).

The selection of a provider is the customer's responsibility as a parent. VR staff may help the customer access information about how to select appropriate, safe child care through the DFPS website.

### C-1405-2: Acceptable Child Care Providers

DFPS licenses, registers, or lists the following categories of providers (see definitions at [Childcare Providers Licensed, Registered or Listed through the Department of Family Protective Services](http://intra.twc.state.tx.us/intranet/drs/programs/vr/docs/ChildCarePrvidrsApprvdByDFPS.docx)):

* Licensed Child Care Center
* Licensed Child Care Home
* Registered Child Care Home
* Listed Family Home

VR does not pay for services provided by an individual who is not identified on the [DFPS website](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care/Search_Texas_Child_Care/ppFacilitySearchDayCare.asp) as a provider in one of these categories. Exceptions may not be made to this policy.

If a customer wants to use someone to provide child care who is not currently recognized by DFPS, he or she must contact his or her [local DFPS](https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care/Local_Child_Care_Licensing_Offices/default.asp) licensing office to learn how to become licensed, registered, or listed. The procedure for becoming a Listed Family Home requires limited documentation and may be appropriate for a family member or friend who wants to provide child care. See the Procedure for Becoming Listed as a Child-Care Provider on the TWC-VR intranet.

### C-1405-3: Establishing a Child Care Provider as a Vendor

If the customer selects an acceptable child care provider who is not already a VR provider, VR staff emails [VR RHW Provider Services](mailto:vr.rhw.providerservices@twc.texas.gov) to begin the process.

The child care provider must be set up as a provider for VR and paid directly for services. VR Managers may not make an exception to this requirement. For more information on setting the child care provider as a provider, see VRSM D-200: Purchasing Goods and Services.

### C-1405-4: Child Care Payment Guidelines

If no comparable benefits are available for child care, VR may pay up to 100 percent of the customer's child care costs during training, not to exceed the maximum rates listed in WD Letter 22-22, Attachment 1: Fiscal Year 2023 Child Care Provider Reimbursement Rates (PDF). Child care payments during training are limited to the duration of training.

VR adopts and implements the rates used and monitored by TWC for child care rates.

Payments may not exceed the maximum allowed rates listed in the Increased Rates table.

#### Maximum Full Day Rates for Child Care

Each Local Workforce Development Board (Board) sets the maximum rates for child care services. Those rates are outlined in the state's Child Care and Development Fund State Plan.

The rates are set for (1) Licensed Child Care Centers, (2) Licensed Child Care Homes, and (3) Registered Child Care Homes. Each of these categories has additional rates for each of these provider types that are Texas Rising Star providers (2-, 3-, or 4-star providers). This information is found in WD Letter 22-22, Attachment 1: Fiscal Year 2023 Child Care Provider Reimbursement Rates (PDF).

Age groups in each provider type are as follows:

* Infants age 0 to 17 months
* Toddlers age 18 to 35 months
* Preschool age children from 36 to 71 months
* School age children 72 months to 13 years

#### Procedures

The following procedures are used to find the amount in fees that VR pays for child care. If the fees exceed the maximum rate listed in WD Letter 22-22, Attachment 1: Fiscal Year 2023 Child Care Provider Reimbursement Rates (PDF), VR pays the amount that is listed as the maximum rate.

### Table for Calculating Daily Rates

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Calculating Daily Rates** | **To obtain the daily rate:** |
| Providers with monthly rates | Divide the rate by 4.33, then divide the result by 5. |
| Providers with biweekly rates | Divide the rate by 2.165, then divide the result by 5. |
| Providers with weekly rates | Divide the weekly amount by 5. |
| Providers with hourly rates | Multiply the hourly rate by 12 to calculate the full-day rate and by 6 to calculate the part-day rate. |

Providers with multiple rates within an age category average all applicable rates to obtain the published rate for the age category, then determine the daily rate using the appropriate method.

Some providers may charge a registration fee in addition to ordinary child care costs. VR may pay the registration fee to the facility once per calendar year for each child who will be participating in child care.

When identifying applicable fees, VR staff must be aware that activity fees include only the fees that all parents are required to pay and do not include fees for optional activities such as field trips or optional classes.

VR may pay for child care after a customer has achieved employment for a total of no more than two months at the following percentages:

* 100 percent for the first four weeks
* 80 percent for the fifth week
* 60 percent for the sixth week
* 40 percent for the seventh week
* 20 percent for the eighth week

## C-1406: Occupational Licenses

An occupational license is any license, permit, or fee for the examination of a license, or other written authorization required by the state, city, or other government unit that must be obtained to work or to run a small business. Occupational licenses are one of the tools used in the rehabilitation process.

### C-1406-1: Legal Authorization

#### 34 CFR §361.48(b)(16)

"(b) Services for individuals who have applied for or been determined eligible for vocational rehabilitation services. As appropriate to the vocational rehabilitation needs of each individual and consistent with each individual's individualized plan for employment, the designated State unit must ensure that the following vocational rehabilitation services are available to assist the individual with a disability in preparing for, securing, retaining, advancing in or regaining an employment outcome that is consistent with the individual's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice:

(16) Occupational licenses, tools, equipment, initial stocks, and supplies."

### C-1406-2: Occupational License Fees

VR pays fees only for:

* licenses; and
* necessary examinations or registrations.

VR does not pay state or municipal tax assessments on occupations. Management must not make any exceptions.

VR does not pay for dues to a professional association or trade union unless paying the dues meets best-value purchasing criteria or unless the VR counselor can justify the purchase as critical to the success of the customer's employment. If the VR counselor believes that payment to a professional association or trade union is critical to the success of the customer's employment, the VR counselor must enter a case note in RHW that explains the justification for the decision and obtain VR Manager approval. The VR Manager may consult with TWC Office of General Council as needed to determine if use of VR funds is allowed.

VR funds cannot be paid to organizations that financially support a lobbyist.

## C-1407: Tools and Equipment

VR purchases only tools and/or equipment required to support a customer's planned employment outcome. "Required tools and equipment" must be included as a service on the IPE before authorizing purchase or transfer of items to the customer.

#### Customer Responsibility

The customer is required to take reasonable care of the tools, equipment, and supplies provided and is liable for loss and damage resulting from wrongful act or neglect.

#### VR Counselor Responsibility

The VR counselor must assure that the proper tools are purchased and that they are not ordinarily provided by the employer. It is also the responsibility of the VR counselor to exercise reasonable diligence in recovering items and document in the case record the circumstances relating to any loss or damage to equipment.

### C-1407-1: Tools

A tool is defined as an instrument (such as a saw, file, knife, or wrench) used or worked by hand or machine to perform a task.

Tools required for employment must be used by the customer:

* to participate in a training program; or
* for entry into an employment situation.

Tools that are purchased or provided for customers include only those tools that are normally required for workers in the same or similar trade or profession.

In many instances, tools that are required for training or employment are provided by the training facility or owner of the business rather than by the employee. If tools are provided without cost to other students or employees, VR does not purchase or provide tools for a customer.

### C-1407-2: Equipment

Equipment is defined as fixtures, apparatuses, machinery, or appliances that are normally found in a place of business, the function of which is to carry out the requirements of the business in an efficient manner. This includes motorized equipment such as:

* power accessories;
* garden tractors;
* portable vending stands;
* special motor scooters;
* stationary equipment; and
* special lighting fixtures.

Examples of items not considered equipment are:

* automobiles;
* operating capital;
* buildings;
* operating cost; and
* land.

Equipment required for employment must be used by the customer:

* to participate in a training program; or
* for entry into an employment situation.

Equipment that is purchased or provided for customers includes only those items that are normally required for workers in the same or similar trade or profession.

In many instances, equipment that is required for training or employment is provided by the training facility or owner of the business rather than by the employee. If equipment is already provided without cost to other students or employees, VR does not purchase or provide the equipment for a customer.

### C-1407-3: Purchasing and Documenting Tools or Equipment

VR may purchase required tools and equipment for the customer when the following conditions are met:

* The IPE shows that the customer is entering a training program or employment
* Purchased tools and equipment are of good quality and are regularly required for the chosen occupation, trade, or profession
* The cost of tools and equipment does not exceed a total of $5,000 for all tools and equipment

If the cost of required tools and equipment exceeds $5,000, management approval is required according to the following thresholds:

* Greater than $5,000 to $15,000—VR Manager approval required
* Greater than $15,000 to $25,000—Regional director or deputy regional director approval required
* Greater than $25,000—VR Division Director approval required

For additional purchasing requirements, refer to VRSM D-205: Purchasing Threshold Requirements.

Tools and equipment may be repaired if replacement is more expensive.

Remind the customer of the agreement in the IPE to:

* safeguard and maintain proper custody of tools and equipment;
* not dispose of tools and equipment unless they are unserviceable or obsolete; and
* return usable tools and equipment not used as planned to VR.

If a customer reports that their tools and equipment were lost or stolen, they must provide a copy of a police report.

VR must recover usable tools and equipment that the customer no longer needs. When a customer refuses to return VR property, refer to VRSM C-1407-5: Reporting Lost or Stolen Tools and Equipment for further action.

VR retains residual title to all tools, equipment, and unused supplies issued to a customer during the rehabilitation process.

#### Paying for Goods

VR staff must obtain the customer's signature on an itemized receipt or cash register receipt that describes each good purchased, or Form VR2014, Rehabilitation Equipment Receipt and Agreement, and place the signed receipt in the case file.

Refer to VRSM A-210: PIN and Signature Procedures for more information on signatures.

#### Receipt of Items

Form VR2014, Rehabilitation Equipment Receipt and Agreement, provides VR with a list of rehabilitation equipment items issued to the customer and familiarizes the customer with the terms of the transaction. It also provides evidence of the return of the equipment.

Form VR2014 is used for rehabilitation equipment issued by:

* VR field staff; and
* Employment Assistance Services (Customer Technical Support).

Note: Do not use Form VR2014 when purchasing items associated with physical restoration, such as low-vision aids and glucometers.

#### When Initiated in the Field

When initiated in the field, the VR counselor:

* lists all customer-tagged and/or nontagged equipment, as outlined on the customer's IPE, which are issued to the customer;
* verifies that the customer is aware of the responsibility to properly care for the equipment and understands the other terms of the agreement;
* has the customer sign and date the form acknowledging receipt of the equipment;
* places the signed original Form VR2014 in the customer's case file; and
* gives a copy of Form VR2014 to the customer.

#### When Initiated by the Customer Technical Support Technician

When initiated by the Customer Technical Support Technician:

* Customer Technology Services lists all customer-tagged and/or nontagged equipment that is being sent on Form VR2014;
* the VR counselor reviews Form VR2014 and the contents of all boxes sent, and documents in RHW with a case note;
* the VR counselor meets with the customer and verifies that the customer is aware of the responsibility to properly care for the equipment and understands the other terms of the agreement;
* VR staff has the customer sign and date the form acknowledging receipt of the equipment;
* the VR counselor places the signed original Form VR2014 in the customer's case file; and
* the VR counselor gives a copy of Form VR2014 to the customer.

### C-1407-4: Returning, Recovering, and Transferring Tools and Equipment

#### Returning Tools or Equipment

Upon return of the tools or equipment, the VR staff member completes and signs the bottom portion of the original Form VR2014, Rehabilitation Equipment Receipt and Agreement, signifying return of the equipment and releasing the customer from responsibility.

#### Recovering Tools or Equipment

When VR becomes aware that the customer is no longer using the VR-issued tools or equipment for the intended purpose or the customer no longer needs the tools and equipment for any reason, then VR works with the customer and/or his or her family to recover VR property that is still usable.

The VR counselor documents recovery efforts and the outcome of recovery efforts in a case note in the customer's electronic case file. Recovered tools and equipment that are still usable can then be issued to another customer to meet his or her needs in the VR process.

Note: VR staff must exercise good judgment and keep in mind the degree to which normal wear and tear has affected the property's usability. If it is believed that the tools or equipment are no longer usable by other VR customers, VR staff must document this decision and the facts that led to the decision in a case note.

#### Transferring Tools or Equipment

Occupational tools, equipment, and supplies originally purchased for a customer and later recovered may be transferred to another customer if the equipment is still serviceable or under warranty.

The administrative supervisor transfers customer equipment from one customer location to another and:

* assesses the condition of the equipment; or
* hires a local consultant to assess it, when necessary; and
* reports the equipment condition to the receiving administrative supervisor.

The VR counselor documents transfers and reissues in case notes of both customers involved. The VR counselor does not enter the name of one customer in another customer's case file.

### C-1407-5: Reporting Lost or Stolen Tools and Equipment

Reporting the misappropriation of tools and equipment

If a customer sells, pawns, loans, uses as loan collateral, transfers to an unauthorized known third party, refuses to return items that are no longer being used to support VR outcomes, or otherwise uses tools or equipment unlawfully, then VR staff:

* notifies the third party immediately that the state has title to the property;
* requests that the property be returned; and
* contacts TWC's Office of General Counsel before VR files theft charges against the customer.

## C-1408: Wage Services for Work Experience through WorkQuest

WorkQuest is a private, nonprofit corporation that links Texans with disabilities to meaningful employment opportunities, improving quality of life for thousands of individuals across the state. TWC has entered into a contract with WorkQuest to provide Wage Services for VR customers. Wage Services allow VR to pay a customer's wages when he or she is participating in a Work Experience Service. Wage Services includes gross earnings, worker compensation and associated costs including payroll processing, payroll reporting, and other payroll processing functions.

Work Experience Services are intended to be short-term (12 weeks or less) and part-time.  For additional information, refer to VRSM C-421: Work Experience Services.

WorkQuest CRPs define part-time as not exceeding an average of 30 hours per week over the course of the entire work experience assignment (training period). A customer may work up to 40 hours per week for one or more weeks during the training period, if such a schedule is necessary for completion of training or demonstration of readiness for full-time employment, so long as the average of 30 hours per week over the training period is not exceeded.  For services described and purchased through VR-SFP Chapter 13: Work Readiness Services the customer's hours cannot be greater than part-time.

WorkQuest through one of their Community Rehabilitation Providers (not a TWC-VR provider) will:

* be the employer of record for the customer;
* be responsible for onboarding the customer and completing tasks such as I-9 verification;
* coordinate and collect payroll documentation from the VR customer's work experience worksite entity;
* accurately process a bimonthly paycheck, unless a different frequency is agreed to in writing by VR and WorkQuest;
* make direct deposits or deposits to a pay card, that include a pay stub on the pay date;
* provide W-2 forms in accordance with Internal Revenue Service requirements;
* prepare supplemental payroll to correct errors in pay when necessary and applicable;
* notify the VR counselor of any worker's compensation claims made by or on behalf of VR customers; and
* notify the VR counselor of worksite incidents involving injury, property damage, or behavioral issues that result in termination of a customer's placement at the worksite, as soon as possible, but not later than forty-eight (48) hours after the incident.

Wage Services provided through WorkQuest are intended to support VR customers and "students and youth with disabilities," including those who are potentially eligible when participating in Work Experience Services as defined in the VR-SFP Chapter 14: Work Experience Services.

Students with disabilities, including students who are potentially eligible, may also receive Wage Services through WorkQuest when a Workforce Development Board (WDB) does not provide Wage Services. If Wage Services are available through the WDB, VR Supervisor approval is required when using WorkQuest for students and youth with disabilities instead of a WDB’s Wage Service. If Wage Services are not available through the WDB, VR Supervisor approval is not required to use WorkQuest. For additional information on WDBs that provide Wage Services, refer to the Year-Round Paid Work Experience intranet page.

Pre-ETS funds may be used in cases where the customer meets the Student with a disability criterion established in VRSM C-1302-1: Student or Transition Services Customer. When a "student with a disability" is potentially eligible, the VR counselor must follow policy found in VRSM C-1305-6: Providing Pre-Employment Transition Services, Working with Potentially Eligible Students.

Wage Services can be purchased for multiple work experiences for the same customer when necessary to meet the customer's goals. Wage Services should not be purchased for a customer to be placed in the same type of position at the same work experience site. Refer to VRSM C-421: Work Experience Services and VR-SFP Chapter 14: Work Experience Services for additional information.

Wage Services can be purchased when a customer obtains a work experience placement through various ways or avenues such as:

* VR-SFP Chapter 14: Work Experience Services;
* On an exception basis to support students in work experience opportunities, when a Workforce Development Board (WDB) is not contracted to perform wage services, or the wage services is otherwise unavailable from the WDB; and
* When VR staff work directly with a business to develop a training model designed around their business structure that includes paid work experience. In these models, the goal is for VR customers to gain training that leads to employment with the business partner. These models are to be coordinated with the Business Relations Coordinator and approved by the Deputy Regional Director or Regional Director.

When VR customers are placed at the job site TWS-VRS staff are responsible for monitoring each worksite.

Prior to making a referral for Wage Services, the customer must obtain a work experience placement, that matches the customer's individualized plan for employment (IPE) or the trial work plan (TWP).

For a Work Experience Placement obtained via VR-SFP Chapter 14: Work Experience Services, a Form VR3142, Worksite Agreement for Wage Services must be signed by the representative from the work experience site. Either the VR counselor or Work Experience Specialist can obtain the required signatures on the Form VR3142, Worksite Agreement for Wage Services. The Form VR3142, Worksite Agreement for Wage Services must be in place prior to making a referral to WorkQuest for Wage Services and before issuing a service authorization for wage services. For additional information refer to Chapter 14: Work Experience Services.

Work Experience via Summer Earn and Learn and work experience placements arranged by VR staff may require a work site agreement or other related agreement.

### C-1408-1: Determining the Wage and Associated Cost for Work Services

VR work experience placements are classified into three levels using O\*NET's My Next Move Job Zones found at <https://www.onetonline.org/find/zone>. The VR counselor must identify the 6-digit SOC code that represents the position for which the customer will be fulfilling in the work experience placement and enter the 6-digit SOC code into My Next Move to identify the Job Zone the position falls under. The Job Zone level identifies what the customer's gross income and WorkQuest corresponding bill rate when wage services are purchased for a customer.

### C-1408-2: Wage Levels and Rates

The customer hourly wage rates were derived from My Next Move wage rates supplied by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data as adapted by O\*Net and they serve as the basis for the WorkQuest Bill Rate which are "fully-loaded" with all applicable taxes, insurance, and fees.

TWC-VR is using the O\*Net, Job Zones to describe the Entry, Intermediate, and Advanced wage levels associated with a customer's position when in work experience.

#### Entry Level: Includes O\*Nets' My Next Move Job Zones One and Two

* Purpose:
  + determine if customer is ready for competitive integrated employment;
  + explore possible career options for customer; and
  + develop skills to increase a customer's employability.
* Knowledge, experience, responsibilities and level of supervision of a customer:
  + little or no previous work-related skill, knowledge, or experience;
  + may have some transferable skills, basic knowledge from experience;
  + knowledge of the tasks, duties and responsibilities related to position;
  + follows standard procedures and written instructions to accomplish assigned tasks;
  + work is routine, and tasks are standardized; and
  + works under direct supervision.
* Education and training of the customer may require a high school diploma or GED certificate.
* The associated gross wage is $10.90 per hour, and
* WorkQuest bill rate per hour is $19.96.

Examples of positions classified as entry level include, but are not limited to: (Refer to <https://www.onetonline.org/find/zone> for a complete list.)

* Baristas
* Cooks/ Food preparations / Food Servers
* Counter attendants
* Customer services representatives/ Order Clerk/ Receptionist/ Information Clerk
* Data Entry/Word Processor
* Floral Designer
* Helpers for carpenters. electricians, installers, mason
* Home Health Aides/ Personal Care Aides/ Nursing Assistant/ Physical Therapy Assistant
* Janitors/Cleaners/ House Keeper/ Maid
* Landscapers/ Ground Keepers
* Nursery Worker/ Nanny/ Child Care Worker
* Office Clerk/ File Clerks/ Mail Clerk
* Painter/ Construction/ Maintenance Worker
* Parking Attendant/ Security Guard
* Reservation/ Ticket agent
* Stock Clerks
* Telemarketers
* Waiters/ Waitresses

#### Intermediate Level: Includes O\*Nets' My Next Move Job Zone Three

* Purpose:
  + demonstrate skills and gain experience applicable to potential vocational or associates degree trainings; and
  + evaluate if the customer still has capacity to continue to work in a field due to acquired vocational barrier(s).
* Knowledge, experience, responsibilities and level of supervision of a customer:
  + previous work-related skill, knowledge, or experience (completion of training program);
  + demonstrates and applies the fundamental concepts, practices and procedures of field of specialization;
  + performs work that is varied and may be somewhat difficult; and
  + performs work under minimum supervision that is somewhat difficult and requires limited responsibility.
* Education and training the customer may be required to complete:
  + an apprenticeship; or
  + one or two years of vocational training (certificate program or on the job training) or associate degree.
* The associated gross wage is $13.92 per hour, and
* WorkQuest bill rate per hour is $24.74.

Examples of positions classified as intermediate level include, but are not limited to: (Refer to <https://www.onetonline.org/find/zone> for a complete list.)

* Auto mechanic-certified
* Book Keeping/Accounting/Audit Clerk
* Computer Operators
* Construction and Building Inspectors
* Court Reporters
* Dental Assistant/Hygienist
* Desktop Publishing
* Electrician
* Emergency Medical Technician
* Fire Inspector
* Fitness Trainer/Aerobics Instructor
* Hairdresser/Hairstylist/Cosmetologist/Barber
* Human Recourse Assistant
* Insurance Claims Clerk
* Licensed Vocational Nurse
* Manufacturing Production Technician
* Medical/Clinical Lab Technician
* Medical/Legal Secretaries
* Medical Assistant
* Surveying Technicians
* Tailors/Dress maker/Custom Sewers
* Teacher Assistant/ Preschool Teacher
* Occupational Therapy/Physical Therapy Assistant
* Plumbers
* Police Officer
* Veterinary Assistant
* Welder

#### Advanced Level: Includes O\*Nets' My Next Move Job Zone Four

* Purpose:
  + demonstrate skills and to gain experience related to the degree; and
  + evaluates if the customer still has capacity to continue to work in a field due to acquired vocational barriers.
* Knowledge, experience, responsibilities and level of supervision of a customer:
  + works with general supervision;
  + possesses and applies a broad knowledge of principles, practices, and procedures of particular field of specialization to the completion of difficult assignments;
  + work responsibilities maybe board in nature; and
  + competent in skills and may assist or teach others.
* Education and training the customer may be required to complete a four-year bachelor's degree or higher degree.
* The associated gross wage is $20.32 per hour, and
* WorkQuest bill rate per hour is $34.83

Examples of positions classified as advance level include, but are not limited to: (Refer to <https://www.onetonline.org/find/zone> for a complete list.)

* Adult Basic/ Secondary Education/ Special Education/Literacy Teachers and Instructors
* Advertising Agent
* Automotive/Bio Chemical/ Chemical/ Civil Engineers
* Budget Analysts
* Clinical Data Manager
* Construction Manager
* Database Administrator/Architect
* Editors
* Logisticians
* Manufacturing Engineers
* Museum Technicians & conservators
* Park Naturalist
* Patient Representative
* Program Directors
* Public Relations/Fundraising Manager
* General/Operational Manager
* Human Resource Specialists/Manager
* Insurance Sale Agent
* Landscape Architect
* Real Estate Broker
* Occupational/ Physical/Recreational/Music Therapist
* Sale Representative Wholesale/Manufacturing
* Sales Manager
* Software Developers
* Storage/Distribution Manager
* Training and Development Specialist/Manager

Note: The "net pay" the customer will receive will vary based on the individual customer's W-4 information.

### C-1408-3: VR Counselor Roles and Responsibilities in Wage Services

VR staff should proactively collaborate and coordinate with prospective employers to connect individuals with disabilities to opportunities for successful employment. VR counselors are encouraged to work with their local Business Relations Coordinator to help set up a training model with a local employer. When VR customers are placed at the job site, VR staff are responsible for monitoring each worksite.

When students with disabilities are participating in paid work experience and WIOA Title I programs, such as WIOA youth program, work experience is permitted. VR staff must ensure the services provided are complimentary and not duplicative, and that both sets of services are documented in the student's ReHabWorks (RHW) case, indicating which services are purchased and which are arranged.

To make a referral for Wage Services, the VR counselor must submit an encrypted email to [djones@uandispreadthelight.com](mailto:djones@uandispreadthelight.com).

The email should include the following:

* must include the TWC SA #xxxxxxx in the email subject line;
* an attached Service Authorization;
* an attached Form VR3141, Referral for Wage Services -  WorkQuest; and
* a Worksite Agreement (when applicable).

When a customer is actively receiving Wage Services from WorkQuest, the VR counselor ensures the following are completed by VR staff:

* develop or coordinate the work experience placement that is made by VR directly, or an employment service provider;
* purchase work experience training from an employment service provider when a customer needs more training or supervision than the work experience site can provide;
* explain the availability of TWS-VRS sponsorship of wage services while the customer is participating in a work experience when placements are established by an employment service provider;
* obtain worksite agreements if one is required
* issue a SA to WorkQuest authorizing payment of wages for a VR customer;
* complete a Referral Form to accompany the SA;
* assist the customer with completing documents provided by the WorkQuest CRP for onboarding purposes. The employer of record is responsible for verifying information on the I-9 and is the signatory of record;
* monitor the worksite and addressing any needs or concerns shared by the worksite supervisor or worksite contact person regarding the customer's performance at the worksite, or by the employment services provider as outlined in the VR Standards for Providers;
* monitor the work experience to ensure that the customer's hours worked does not exceed the number of hours indicated on the Referral Form and SA; and
* process invoices received from WorkQuest in a timely manner.

A VR counselor should provide counseling and guidance to the customer through their participation in a work experience gaining information on hours work and skills learned. Refer to VRSM C-100: Counseling and Guidance.

### C-1408-4: Creating a Service Record for Wage Services in ReHabWorks

A service record must be created with the following specifications. MAPS Code "WRKQST" can assist with locating the specifications.

#### VR Basic:

Level 1 - Wage Services for Paid Work Experience WorkQuest (TIBH) only

Level 2 - Wage Services for Paid Work-based Learning Programs - VR Basic Support (Payroll accounting services) WorkQuest only CONTRACT REQUIRED [84111-84111]

Choose the appropriate specifications for Level 3 and 4 based on the core service to be provided.

#### Pre-ETS:

Level 1 - Wage Services for Paid Work Experience WorkQuest (TIBH) only

Level 2 - Wage Services for Paid Work Experience - VR Pre-ETS (Payroll accounting services) WorkQuest only CONTRACT REQUIRED [84111-84112]

Choose the appropriate specifications for Level 3 and 4 based on the core service to be provided.